

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE
Illinois
COUNTY:
Cook
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE:

## 1. NAME

COMMON:

Germania Club

AND/OR HISTORIC:

Germania Club

## 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

108 West Germania Place

CITY OR TOWN:

Chicago

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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STATE

Illinois

CODE

COUNTY:

Cook

CODE

## 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	PUBLIC ACQUISITION:	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building	<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	Yes:
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> Restricted
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process	<input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted
		<input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered		<input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious	<u>ethnic social</u>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<u>club</u>	

## 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:

Germania Club, Inc.

STREET AND NUMBER:

108 West Germania Place

CITY OR TOWN:

Chicago

STATE:

Illinois

CODE

## 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Cook County Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

County Building, 118 North Clark Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Chicago

STATE:

Illinois

CODE

## 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY:

1956

 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE:

D.C.

CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE

COUNTY

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Having a five-story facade above a lower level basement, the building stretches for six bays along the south elevation and four along the east. The two-story base, which has survived without major alterations, is composed of limestone courses, alternately rough and smooth. On the south facade a columnar portico containing a large, arched doorway stands before the third bay to the east. The three bays west of it have basement windows; on the floor above are large, linteled, double-divided windows. The two bays to the east of the entrance, and the four along the Clark Street facade, house commercial shops on the ground floor and have triple-divided windows above.

The upper part of both facades has a rich complexity of forms. Each bay contains a large window divided into two sections by a column that sustains a limestone cornice; an arch is placed above each part of the window, and the window unit in each bay is capped by a single decorated limestone pediment. A stout, ornamented pilaster rising from a corbel set just below the limestone cornice rises between the pediments to hold the large cornice that concludes the building. Between these pilasters are six panels of brick or decorative limestone separated by limestone colonnettes decorated with spiral fluting.

In the upper part not all the bays are the same. The double windows in the easternmost bay on the south facade are replaced by three stout limestone piers that sustain a terra cotta panel revealing an allegorical female figure. On the Clark Street facade, the building is enlivened by two bays in the center that contain an enclosed porch projecting beyond the face of the building.

The southeast corner is anchored by a pyramidal roofed projection the size of a corner bay.

Upon entering, one is in an anteroom which contains steps that lead to two double doors. Beyond this set of doors is the large entrance hall which gives access to the various parts of the building. To the left are the club restaurant and bar, game rooms, and the Wagner Room, a lush banquet room with richly carved fixtures, frescoes of German themes, and wood friezes with themes from Wagnerian operas. To the right of the entrance hall is the grand staircase leading to the grand ballroom directly above the club rooms. It is a high ceilinged hall with large chandeliers and an impressive tile portrait ("our masterpiece") depicting the Spirit of Germania in a rich rococo setting reminiscent of a church reredos. Other inside spaces include offices, a secret society's meeting room, various other club rooms, and offices and recreation rooms in the basement.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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6. (Continued)

Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks  
(local)  
1973  
320 North Clark Street, Room 800  
Chicago, Illinois

Landmarks Preservation Council and Service Inventory  
(local)  
1973  
407 South Dearborn Street  
Chicago, Illinois

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(Number all entries)

5. (Continued)

The Germania Club is the last surviving structure commemorating an area on the Northwest side which was in the 19th century the center of Chicago's German community. As such it provides a pleasing and human counterpart to the high rise complex of Sandburg Village, and is in fact often used by the residents of the apartment complex when a large hall is needed for social functions.

## SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian     16th Century     18th Century     20th Century  
 15th Century     17th Century     19th Century

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1889; August Fiedler, architect

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                      |   |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>urban planning</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature  | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music       |   | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |                                      |   | _____   |

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The major significance of the Germania Club is historical. It is certainly the most outstanding historical site in the area for Chicago's German residents, one of the largest ethnic communities of the city. In a wider sense it is an important landmark to the city's peculiar ethnic character, a character that distinguishes Chicago from most other large American cities. The Club building dates from 1889, just 24 years after the founding of the Germania Maennerchor (the Germania Men's Chorus) as a choral group formed to laud Lincoln at his funeral. The club is Chicago's oldest German organization. The present building is the only home which the club has owned and occupied in its 109 years. As the premier hall for significant events in the German community, the Germania Club has long been the scene of many of the key events which have shaped and affected this ethnic group, as can be seen in the fact that the name of the club was changed to the "Lincoln Club" during the First World War, which was a time of great persecution for German-Americans. It is still used extensively by the German community.

The architectural significance of the club is also great, and its historical significance is reflected in its architecture. It is a bold structure clearly derived from then-current German architectural motifs. It therefore reflects the conservatism dominant in the 19th century middle-class German community, which was concerned with becoming an accepted and valuable part of the American community. The architecture can be described as eclectic, with a predominance of neo-classical and German Renaissance elements. The architect, August Fiedler, practiced in New York, where he designed over fifty schools for the New York public school system. In New York, he was closely connected with the German community.

This building is an interesting counterpart to the more adventurous spirit of the Chicago school. It reflects a basic conservatism and concern for past styles which Chicago's architects were to a great extent rejecting at the time the club was built. The Germania Club is also an excellent example of the monumental style used at the time for public buildings and mansions, where architects were not liberated by the immediacy and peculiar demands of commerce.

Throughout the Club's history members and individuals interested in the German community have donated works of art which decorate the interior. Premier among these is the tile allegorical portrait of the Spirit of Germania in the main ballroom, which was commissioned by Kaiser Wilhelm II for the German exhibit at the Columbian Exposition and which was later donated by the Kaiser to the Club. A number of the rooms are decorated with frescoes and friezes on German themes done by local artists.

(continued)

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Ira Bach, Chicago on Foot, Chicago, 1973.

One Hundredth Anniversary of the Germania Club, 1865-1965, Karl Harig, Chairman, Centennial Committee, 64pp., Chicago, 1965.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	0	'	"	0	'	"	0	'	"
NE	0	'	"	0	'	"	0	'	"
SE	0	'	"	0	'	"	0	'	"
SW	0	'	"	0	'	"	0	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 1

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Lewis Schorsch, c/o C. W. Westfall

ORGANIZATION: Landmarks Preservation Council DATE: 1/22/76

STREET AND NUMBER:  
407 South Dearborn Street

CITY OR TOWN: Chicago STATE: Illinois CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS